



# Ladder of Success



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## FUN LITERACY RELATED WEBSITES

[www.dotolearn.com](http://www.dotolearn.com)  
[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)  
[www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)  
[www.abcteach.com](http://www.abcteach.com)  
[www.kids-pages.com](http://www.kids-pages.com)  
[www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org)  
[www.kizclub.com/body.html](http://www.kizclub.com/body.html)  
[www.makelearningfun.com](http://www.makelearningfun.com)

*Submitted by Jean Craanen*

## Student Services Goals

Welcome to the publication of the first of three Trimester GRACE Student Services Newsletters for all parents and staff. We hope you take a moment to review the topics and are able to enhance your knowledge from the information provided.

With the establishment of GRACE the services provided to all of our students has been enhanced. One way in which this has occurred is the establishment of the Students Services Facilitator & Supportive Consultant Goals/Objectives. The goals are as follows:

- ◆ The formation of a GRACE Supportive Consultant Committee with a representative from each school
- ◆ The establishment of a uniform communication trail; including the public school districts that provide services to the GRACE system
- ◆ The Student Services Facilitator and Supportive Consultants will empower teachers via the use of established educational strategies
- ◆ The Student Services Facilitator and Supportive Consultants will promote enhanced communication with GRACE parents
- ◆ Enhancement of learning opportunities for "higher achieving students"

*Submitted by James Cullen*



## A Sincere Thank You

Today I received a "Thank You." It was the pull at your heart strings, tell the world, shout "Halleluiah" kind of thank you! It came from a fourth grader who I've been working with since second grade. Together we have been using the Barton Reading & Spelling System to help with her struggles in reading, spelling, and writing, (all symptoms associated with dyslexia).

Struggling with telling time was a little annoying for her. She often avoided the situation by using digital clocks and watches or asking others for the time. So, together we decided to tackle this time-telling dilemma. She practiced and practiced. At last, a clock, with those crazy little hands, numbers, and markings, made sense. It happened. She could tell time! We celebrated with high fives and smiles all around.

Then, with no prompting, she picked up a board and marker and slowly, carefully, and correctly wrote "thank you." It was so heart warming to see the joy in my student's eyes as she reached her goal and overcame this hurdle. But best of all, her "thank you" was smothered with sincere, heartfelt appreciation.

*If you have concerns about a child, don't wait. Learn more about dyslexia today. Help your striving students reach their goals. They will sincerely "thank you" for it!*

*Several Supportive Consultants at our GRACE Catholic schools are presently helping our striving dyslexic students by using the Orton-Gillingham based Wilson Reading System and the Barton Reading & Spelling System.*

*Submitted By Jean O'Donnell*

**For further article information please visit our website @ <http://www.gracesystem.org/newsletters/>**

# iPads in the Classroom

Submitted by Jean Healy

Recently there was a segment on 60 minutes that investigated using ipads in the classroom, especially for non verbal, autistic students. I was surprised at how the ipads were being used and wondered if there could be a use for them in the regular education classroom.

The segment showed non verbal, autistic students using ipads and special applications as their voice. One young man had been non verbal his whole life. His mother explained that the family had to resort to a game of charades in order to figure out what he wanted. Now, by using the ipad and the application Proloquo2go he is able to share his feelings, order food at a restaurant and much more.

The educators using the ipads in the autistic classroom stated that the students respond better to using the ipad than to traditional methods because

- ◆ It draws them in and they can interact with the ipad
- ◆ Students are more willing to socialize, which is often a challenge for autistic children
- ◆ They are able to focus better and
- ◆ The ipad is predictable whereas, humans are often unpredictable.

I think the possibilities are endless on the different ways we can use them to help special needs students and regular education students.

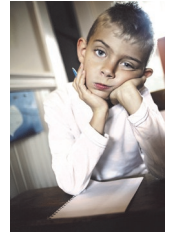


# "I'm Bored. . ."

Submitted by  
DeniseVanZeeland

For teachers and parents, children often use boredom as an excuse for non-accomplishment. An article from Sylvia Burke at <http://teachers.net/gazette/MAR/02> gives 6 examples of good differentiation techniques that everyone can use for "bored" children:

1. **ACCELERATE THE PACE:**  
Target the things that the higher achieving student needs to learn.
2. **COMPACT THE CURRICULUM:** Needs are determined, teaching takes place, understanding is checked.
3. **IN-DEPTH STUDIES:** Allow higher achieving children to go off into a subtopic and dig for details.
4. **COMPLEXITY AND AMBIGUITY:**  
Some children like to look at questions and ideas that can have different points of view.
5. **USE OF ADVANCED MATERIALS:** Allow children that are capable, to work on challenging materials.
6. **ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF EXPRESSION:** Allow children to use interesting ways to express what they have learned.



# Helping Students Succeed . . .

Submitted by Toshia Buchholz

For many students who may struggle academically, and for many who do not, the key to success in the classroom lies in having appropriate supports, accommodations, and modifications made to the instruction and other classroom activities. This is true for our students within the GRACE system as well.

Usually a **modification** means a *change in what is being taught to or expected from the student.*

An **accommodation** is a *change that helps a student overcome or work around the disability.* Allowing a student who has trouble writing to give his answers orally is an example of an accommodation

What is most important to know about modifications and accommodations is that both are meant to help a child to learn.

## Modifications or Adaptations

Modifications or accommodations are most often made in the following areas:

**Scheduling**                      **Instruction**  
**Setting**                              **Materials**  
**Student Response**

# "Why Can't I Skip My Twenty Minutes of Reading Tonight?"

Submitted by Pat Shafer

Let's figure it out mathematically!

**Step 1:** Multiply minutes per night x 5 times each week. Student A reads 20 min. x 5 times a week = 100 min./week  
Student B reads 4 minutes x 5 times a week = 20 minutes.

**Step 2:** Multiply minutes a week x 4 weeks each month.  
Student A reads 400 minutes a month.  
Student B reads 80 minutes a month.

**Step 3:** Multiply minutes a month x 9 months/school year.  
Student A reads 3600 minutes in a school year.  
Student B reads 720 minutes in a school year.  
Student A practices reading the equivalent of 10 whole school days a year. Student B gets the equivalent of only 2 school days of reading practice.

By the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade if Student A and Student B maintain these same reading habits, Student A will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student B will have read the equivalent of only 12 school days. One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened considerably and so, undoubtedly, will school performance.

(from "Road to Reading" online)





## Where Do We Go From Here?

Submitted by Deanna Schauer

Often there are moments when working with children, we throw up our hands and say, "Where do I go now?" The following is a small list of websites where you can find more information about products and tools that will help focus teaching where it needs to be – on the child.

Web-based Autism Software

<http://www.monarchteachtech.com/vizzle/>

Dyslexia Software

<http://www.gogsoftware.com/>

Reading, Writing, Phonemic Awareness and Phonics, Decoding and Spelling

<http://www.donjohnston.com/>

Leveled Reading and Differentiation

<http://www.readinga-z.com/>

Math, Language Arts, and Science (subscription includes lessons and Smartboard activities)

<http://us.educationcity.com/>



## Ten Homework Tips for Parents

Submitted by Jennifer Lenz

### 1. Establish a Routine

The first step in creating a positive homework pathway for your child is by primarily creating a routine.



### 2. Create Boundaries

Parents should create clear boundaries for their child.

### 3. Get Organized

A parent may need to create a homework calendar

### 4. Accountability and Responsibility

A child should be held accountable for homework and assignments

### 5. Create a "Learning Space"

A "learning space" set aside for homework allows them to mentally enter into a "school mode"

### 6. Teach Prioritization

As children are assigned more homework, parents can teach them how to prioritize their assignments.

### 7. Check Your Child's Progress

Many schools now post grades and homework assignments online.

### 8. Allow Freedoms When Earned

Parents can allow certain appropriate freedoms if their child seems to be excelling in their tasks and schoolwork.

### 9. Be a Study Buddy

Parents can offer support by simply helping their child study.

### 10. Encourage and Support

Most importantly, a parent should serve as a motivational academic cheerleader.

## Odyssey Learning

CompassLearning®

Submitted by Mary Swanson

Teachers are constantly trying to find innovative ways to address the needs of the students in their classrooms. GRACE researched and found **Odyssey**, a program we hope will help students increase their MAP test scores. The program "uses MAP results to automatically create learning paths of engaging, challenging activities that teach and review concepts while capturing and holding students' attention."

Students we feel will benefit the most from additional practice will receive 45-90 minutes of work with Odyssey websites per week. Teachers "use data to inform instruction after the initial assessment and throughout the school year." The unique and time saving idea

behind the program is that the activities are aligned to NWEA RIT ranges, enabling teachers to use Odyssey to differentiate instruction for small groups of students."

With Odyssey, teachers are automatically notified if a student is having difficulty with a skill. It also reinforces recently learned concepts along with introducing new concepts so students are continually practicing and learning. Currently our program focus is for "at risk students", our goal is to expand the focus to our advanced students.

(Information taken from <http://www.compasslearning.com/>)

# Traits of Gifted Children

Submitted by Anne Strauss

*Some traits of a gifted child:*

## Cognitive Traits

- ◆ Excellent reasoning skills
- ◆ Well-developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesis
- ◆ Quickly and easily sees relationships in ideas, objects, or facts

## Social and Emotional Traits

- ◆ Interested in philosophical and social issues
- ◆ Usually intrinsically motivated
- ◆ Relates well to parents, teachers and other adults

## Language Traits

- ◆ Extensive Vocabulary
- ◆ Reads Rapidly and Widely
- ◆ Asks "what if" questions

## Additional Traits

- ◆ Enjoys learning new things
- ◆ Enjoys intellectual activity
- ◆ Skeptical, critical, and evaluative

*Note: Students identified as gifted "higher achieving" are dependent upon the school district they attend. GRACE is in the process of establishing a criterion to be used by all of its member schools to identify students as gifted "higher achieving."*

# Math Tips For Parents

Submitted by Amy Heyroth

Here are some tips to help your child solve his/her math problems and overcome their fears:



## 1. Follow up on Homework

Parent monitoring of their child's work/grades is advised.

## 2. Demonstrate the use of Math

Parents can use examples to teach math to their children.

## 3. Real Life Math

Explain to your children how they can use math to solve everyday problems.

## 4. Get them to talk!

Encourage your child to solve their math problems by talking about the correct steps.

5. **Everybody loves money.** Teach your children money skills.

## 6 Make Math Games

Combine math with various games to make it interesting for your children.

For complete list of tips visit: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Kelly\\_J\\_Thomas](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Kelly_J_Thomas)

# Sensory Strategies

Submitted by Gina Vecera

Do you have a student/child that has a difficult time focusing at school? Here are some sensory strategies that may help in the classroom:

- Use natural lighting, whenever possible
- Allow the use of stress balls or fidget toys.
- Avoid rushing the child.
- Play classical music during seat time works.
- Allow child to wear headphones if distracted by background noises.
- Refer frequently to the schedule so the child can mentally prepare for what comes next.
- Use a metronome in the classroom to give the brain something rhythmic to assist with concentration.
- Encourage child to keep a water bottle at his/her desk.
- Allow gum chewing or sucking on mints while working.
- Use alternative seating equipment, such as therapy balls.
- Provide frequent movement breaks.
- In circle time, provide defined boundaries, such as carpet squares for each child.
- Establish eye contact before giving directions.
- Have the student repeat the directions back to you to reinforce what is expected.
- Provide a study carrel to allow child to complete tasks.

# Articulation - Difference or Disorder?

Submitted by Therese Waldkirch

Clear articulation (pronunciation) is a key component to successful spoken communication. Communication is a foundation for school success. So, when do articulation differences become disorders?

GRACE teachers use a new picture-based screening tool to help answer that question. When indicated, **individualized, systematic, structured articulation intervention plans are developed integrating speech practice with reading and language arts activities. Regular practice trains the muscles to respond with strength, accuracy, and automaticity. Responses to Interventions are documented. There is no substitute for daily practice.**

Referral to a Consultation Team, including a Speech/Language Pathologist, may be indicated if a child's sound development continues to interfere with effective communication despite a variety of documented practice. Speech therapy is offered by the public schools for children who have not shown improvement with home-school programs and who meet eligibility criteria. For more information, contact your child's teacher.

[www.waldkircheducationalconsulting.com](http://www.waldkircheducationalconsulting.com)